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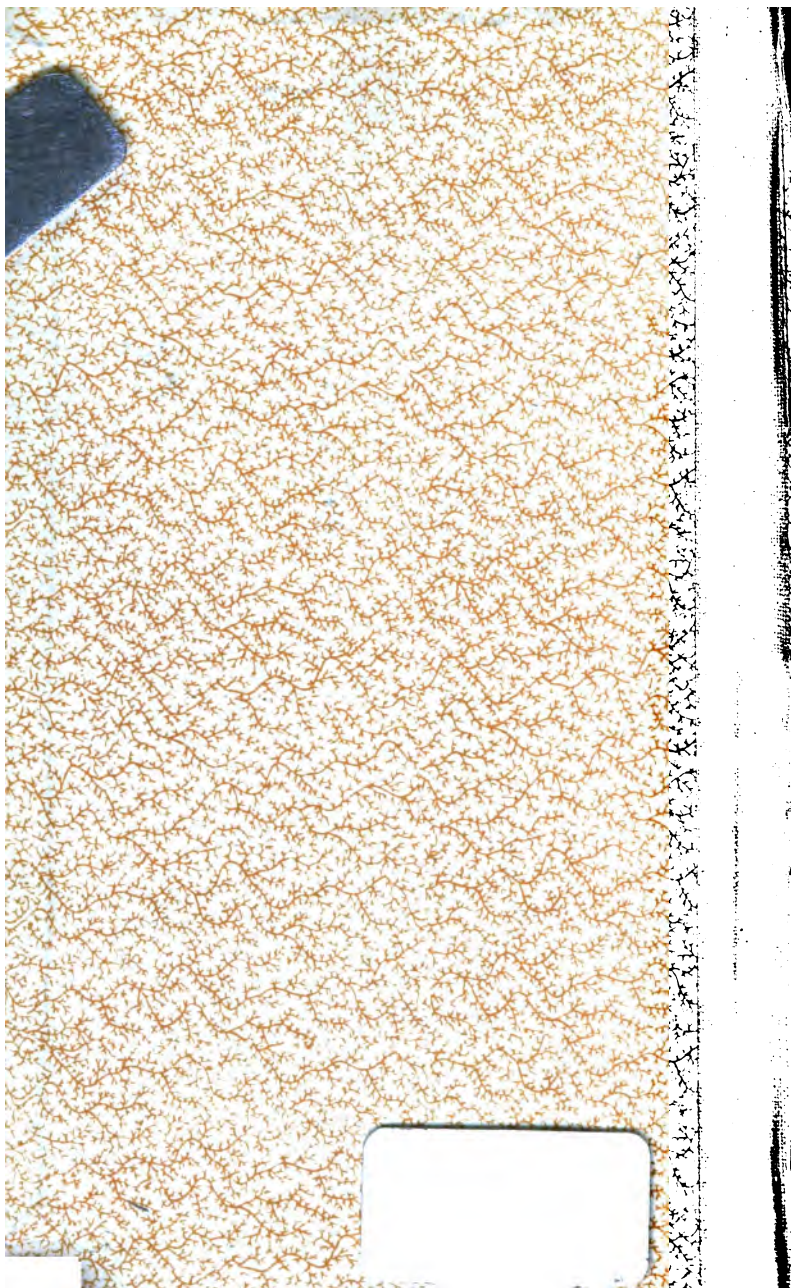
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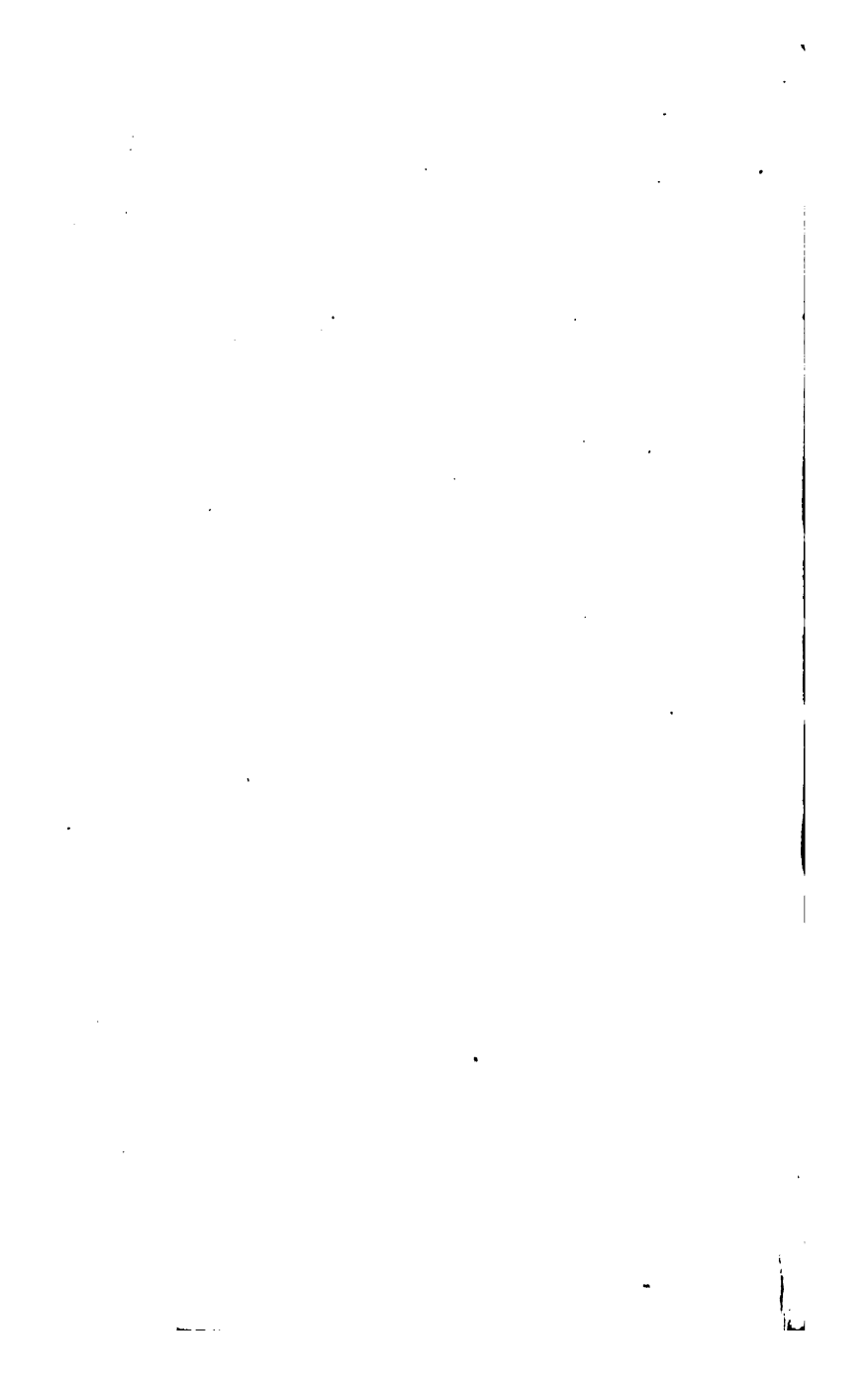
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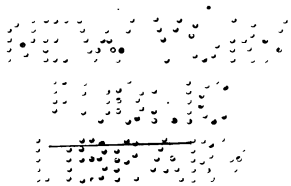
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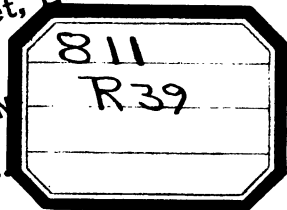
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TO

THREE SINGERS:

DR. W. H. HOLCOMBE,

J. W. OVERALL,

AND

MARY A. TOWNSEND.

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WY WY WY

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PREFACE.

GOD gave a little harp to me ;
I hold it very dear,
I tune the strings to melody,
And play on it by ear

I never spent a single day
Learning the rules of art ;
Unconsciously my fingers play
The music of my heart.

Sometimes my songs are low and sad,
And thrill with tender woe ;
Sometimes my songs are light and glad,
Because my heart is so.

I cannot reach the magic note
That soothes the sorrowing,
Like dark-eyed David when he smote
His harp to cheer the king.

Nor can I waken martial strains
Like the great bards of old,
Whose music throbbed through England's veins
And made her warriors bold.

My harp has only simple strings,
My hands are weak and small ;
I only sing of simple things
In simpler words than all.

And when some day I bow my head,
And friends look sad and say :
" The Singer's dead, the music fled,
Go put her harp away !"

They will not hang it in the halls,
The echoing halls of Fame,
Where every harp against the walls
Vibrates a master's name ;

But bear it tenderly to those
Who loved the simple thing,
Because of simple joys and woes
The Singer used to sing.

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THE ROYAL CAVALCADE.

SPRING is coming, Spring is coming,
Through the arch of Pleasant Days,
With the harps of all her minstrels
Tuned to warble forth her praise.

In her rosy car of Pleasure,
Drawn by nimble-footed Hours,
With a royal guard of Sunbeams
And a host of white-plumed Flowers,

From the busy Court of Nature
Rides the fair young Queen in state,
O'er the road of Perfect Weather,
Leading down to Summer Gate.

Brave old March rides proudly forward,
With her heralds, Wind and Rain ;
He will plant her standard firmly
On King Winter's bleak domain.

Young Lord Zephyr fans her gently,
And Sir Dew-drop's diamonds shine ;
Lady May and Lady April
By her Majesty recline.

Lady April's face is tearful,
And she pouts and frets the while;
But her lips will part with laughter
Ere she rides another mile.

Lady May is blushing deeply,
As she fits her rosy gloves;
She is dreaming of the meeting
With her waiting Poet-loves.

Over meadow, hill, and valley
Winds the Royal Cavalcade,
And, behind, green leaves are springing
In the tracks the car has made.

And her Majesty rides slowly
Through the humble State of Grass,
Speaking kindly to the Peasants
As they crowd to see her pass.

In the corners of the fences
Hide the little Daisy-spies,
Peeping shyly through the bushes,
Full of childish, glad surprise;

And her gentle Maids of Honor,
Modest Violets, are seen
In their gala dresses waiting,
By the road-side, for their Queen.

By her own bright light of Beauty
Does she travel through the day;
And at night her Glow-worm footmen
With their lanterns guide the way.

She is coming, nearer ! nearer !
Hark the sound of chariot wheels !
Fly to welcome her, young minstrel,
Sing the joy your spirit feels.

THE ROYAL FUNERAL.

THE BODY OF THE QUEEN LYING IN STATE.

SPRING, the fairest of the seasons,
Spring, the Virgin Queen, is dead ;
And a young voluptuous sister
Reigns upon her throne instead.

Royal June, with rosy fingers,
Softly closed her violet eyes,
And within the Court of Nature
Now in regal state she lies.

Brave old March, her veteran soldier,
Covered with a tattered fold
Of the banner borne so proudly,
Lies beside her, dead and cold.

Fair capricious Lady April
Sleepeth deep and calmly nigh ;
Round her mouth a smile still lingers,
Still a tear-drop in her eye.

On a bier of withered roses
Lies the tender Lady May,
And her constant loves, the Poets,
Royal honors to her pay.

Low and reverently kneeling
Round her lovely form they throng,
And embalm her precious beauty
With the costly myrrh of song.

Unto each she left a token,
As a dying pledge of love :
One she gave her azure girdle ;
One she gave her rosy glove ;

One she gave her silver sandals,
Bright with shining gems of dew ;
O'er the shoulders of another
She her holy mantle threw.

But to me, the humble singer,
Leaning on my harp apart,
From the royal high-voiced Poets,
She has left a broken heart.

Through the reign of glowing Summer
Lies the royal dead in state ;
High-voiced Poets, humble singer,
Mournfully keep watch and wait ;

Wait ! the sober days are coming,
Sad pall-bearers of the dead ;
In the distant Autumn Country
Hear their slow and solemn tread !

THE PROCESSION.

With the incense of her glory
Burning low and sweet and dim,
And the harps of all her minstrels
Tuned to chant a funeral hymn ;

In a robe of fragrance shrouded
By the spirits of the Flowers,
In a sable hearse of Sorrow,
Drawn by weary-footed Hours ;

From the silent Court of Nature
Comes the fair dead Queen in state,
O'er the road of Gloomy Weather,
Leading down to Winter Gate.

And her royal guard of Sunbeams
Faint and falter through the day,
And at night her Glow-worm footmen
Drop their lanterns by the way.

And the young Lord Zephyr, sighing,
Yields his life upon her bier,
While the diamonds of Sir Dew-drop
Melt away into a tear.

All the trees cast down their garments
In the way where she will pass,
As the sad procession windeth
Through the ruined State of Grass.

Through the Autumn Country slowly
Winds the royal funeral now,
And with rue and heavy cypress
Wreathed upon my thoughtful brow,

By the roadside I stand waiting
For the Queen, and in the dell
I can hear the solemn pealing
Of a dreary funeral knell.

She is coming, nearer! nearer!
Hark that solemn mournful strain!
Fly to honor her, young minstrel,
Joining in the funeral train.

THE BURIAL.

There is mourning through the valleys,
There is wailing on the hills,
And I hear a broken music
In the voice of all the rills.

Nature's heart is sorely troubled,
And her grief is fierce and wild,
As she chants the funeral service
O'er her best-beloved child.

Through the dreamy realms of Winter
Phantom Queens have led the way
To the Land of Gloom and Shadow,
To the Kingdom of Decay.

From the bier the strong young North-Wind
Quickly lifts the Virgin Queen,
While the soft wings of the South-Wind
Drooping o'er her form are seen.

O'er the bride of his Ideal,
Young King Winter bendeth low,
And around her tender body
Wraps a winding-sheet of snow.

And his busy silent workmen,
Frost and Ice, have wrought with care
For the Queen a crystal coffin,
Covered with devices rare.

Now old Time, the haggard Sexton,
Opes the deep tomb of the Past ;
And my broken heart and lyre
On the buried Queen I cast.

REVEILLE.

BRAVE locust, turn out, turn out !
Spring's soldier you are, then come,
All the woods around, a reveille sound
On your magical hidden drum.

Beat, beat, on your dainty drum !
All the insect tribe will hear,
And at every pass through the land of grass
Come thronging from far and near.

Oh, honey bees, one and all,
Come out of the hive, I say ;
Let a queen be found and a king be crowned
To welcome the spring to-day.

Push, push, with your rosy horns,
And hasten your speed, slow snail :
Ah, never you mind—leave your house behind,
With over the door—" For sale !"

Awake from your sleep, black mole,
And sharpen your charmed plow ;
There is work for you in the field to do,
And the meadow is grassy now.

You are very blind, I know !

In darkness you guide your plow ;
Under the ground its furrows are found,
But the Master teaches you how.

Come out of your house, poor toad ;
Don't wear such a solèmn face ;
There is room for you in this fair world too,
And you claim but an humble place.

Wild briers, shake out your tents,
And stretch them across the land :
Encamp by hill, and encamp by rill,
A wand'ring gipsy band.

Lay hold with your thorny hands,
Climb high with your thorny feet,
Grow thick and tall, for the wild birds all
Are trusting in you for meat.

Unlock all your pearly gates,
With diamond keys, oh, dew !
By the golden light of the stars to-night
Let the souls of the flowers through.

All the earth is so fresh and green,
And life such a pleasant thing,
Oh, the Lord I bless, and in joy possess
My portion in his free spring.

Oh, the world is so fair and sweet,
And Heaven and God so near—
To be deaf and dumb, as I go and come,
Is more than my heart can bear.

Sing heart, sing heart, with the birds,
The gladdest of all the throng;
And the King will hear, oh never fear,
Each note of your happy song.

UNDER THE SNOW.

DEEP, deep, deep,
Quickly, so none should know,
I buried my warm love stealthily
Under the winter snow.

For you had coldly said,
Coldly and carelessly,
"Bury your love or let it live,
It is all the same to me."

I tore it out of my heart !
I crushed it within my hand !
It cried to you in its agony
For help, but you came not ; and

It struggled within my grasp ;
It fought with my woman's will ;
It kneeled to my woman's pride with tears ;
Then silent it lay, and still.

I knew that it was not dead,
But I said : " It soon will die,
Buried under the winter snow,
Under the winter sky."

I kissed it tenderly,
Just once, for the long ago ;
Then shrouded it with your cold, cold words,
Colder than all the snow !

Deep, deep, deep,
Quickly, so none should know,
I buried my warm love stealthily
Under the winter snow.

Then with my murderous hands
I raised up the heavy stone
Of SILENCE over my buried love,
Lest the world should hear it moan.

LADY APRIL.

HA, ha, ha, old March may bluster,
I have given him the slip—
Tral, la, la, through wood and meadow,
I am free to dance and skip.

I'm the child of Lady Shower
And Lord Sunshine, and I came
From the fairy land of Rainbow—
Lady April is my name.

All the Poets call me fickle,
But my pretty foolish face
Sets the wisest o' them crazy,
And to singing of my grace.

And the wily landscape painters
Slily follow me about,
Till they catch me in their pictures,
Where I smile, and cry, and pout.

Rise, blue daisies trim and slender,
Let me set you in a row—
Tender notes for birds to whistle
And to sing by, listen!—so!

Ankle deep in balm and blossom,
I must watch my pretty toes,
And step quickly; if I loiter
Each will bud into a rose.

Ho! my spinner, busy spider,
Wind your thread from tree to tree—
Spin a dainty pair of stockings
On your magic wheel for me.

Ho! my soft and silent workman,
Ho! my jeweler, Sir Dew,
Diamond buckles for my garter,
Diamond buckles for my shoe!

Veil your face, and, chastely kneeling,
Set the jewels quickly. Look!
Ha! I see my naked picture
In the mirror of the brook.

Shame upon you, water-lilies,
Peeping at me in the rill!
You could see the picture blushing
• If the water would be still.

Oh! red maple, fold your mantle
Round me closely, and with buds
Button it from throat to ankle
Like a row of ruby studs.

When the buds burst into blossom
I will blush myself away,
With a gentle sigh of pleasure,
In the arms of young Lord May.

THE RAINBOW.

WHEN I was but a simple child
God took my smiles and tears,
And made a rainbow in my heart
To span my future years.

I knew not then, but now I know
That was the reason why
I loved the bow I saw him bend
Across the happy sky.

The child that follows to the end
Will find, so I was told,
A fairy's house, and in the house
A bag of fairy-gold.

And many times, across the fields,
I ran with all my might,
And wept to see the rainbow fade
And vanish from my sight.

I did not know—it fit so light—
That in my heart I wore
A bow that bent o'er fairer things
Than fairy house or store.

Unconsciously, at work or play,
I wore it all about,
And through my eyes nobody saw
The radiance shining out.

I think the birds caught glimpses, tho',
And knew just what it meant,
They made such music when I came,
Such music when I went.

But as my body grew in size,
My heart grew larger too,
And then, to span the widening sky,
Wider the rainbow grew.

Until at last, one happy day,
It grew so wide and fair,
God touched my heart, and suddenly
I felt it shining there ;

A wider bow, a fairer bow,
And tenderer than the one
That is a bright betrothal pledge
Between the rain and sun.

I knew it was God's gift, and said,
"My heart, be not afraid ;
Wear it with grace, remembering
By whom the bow was made."

And now, the more I sympathize
With human joy and woe,
Wider this radiant rainbow grows,
Brighter its colors show.

For sunny smiles and dewy tears
Must always blended be
In every heart in which God sets
The rainbow Poesie.

THE ROYAL FLEET.

THERE'S a fleet of ships a-sailing
From an unknown southern clime,
Up the sunny Bay of Promise,
To'ard the busy wharf of Time.

'Tis the fleet of good Queen Summer,
And I know her ships by name :
June, July, and gallant August—
Staunch old ships of ancient fame.

Once a year we hail them gladly ;
Once a year their sails are furled,
And they safely ride at anchor
In the harbor of the World.

See the June, the proud ship royal,
With her pennon floating wide,
And her sails all set to music,
Coming in with wind and tide.

In her foamy wake, like naiads,
Golden-haired, the sunbeams play,
And a fragrant breath of spices
Floats before her, up the Bay.

Hark ! I hear her happy sailors
Singing gaily, and the Queen,
On her golden deck reclining,
At this distance may be seen.

Round the bend that hides the Future
From the longing Present, now
I can see the topmast-gallant
And the graceful, rosy prow

Of the ship July, with royals
And with skysails trim and light.
But before her deck of beauty
And her white hull floats in sight,

Sail ho ! cries my watchman, Fancy,
And with charmed eyes I gaze
Through the misty leagues of Distance,
Till, beyond the purple haze,

I can see the royal banners,
See the masthead pointing high,
And the snowy sails of August
Stretched against an azure sky.

Now I watch these ships and wonder
Which among the royal three,
Laden deep with all things precious,
Bringeth anything to me?

On the deck of distant August
Does my Poet-lover stand ?
Will he wave a loving signal
From the ship July, or land

With the Queen and Royal party
On the June? Ah, well I know
That my love is surely coming ;
For almost a month ago,

With a rose he sent this message,
By the airy ship of May :
“On a royal ship of Summer,
I will sail to you some day.”

Oh, ye coming ships of Summer,
Quickly dash the waves apart,
For a happy watch I'm keeping
From the lookout of my heart !

MIDSUMMER.

OUT on the porch I draw my chair
To read awhile, but Reverie
Glides by with pansies in her hair,
And shuts the book upon my knee.

How still it is! I hear the light
Quick footsteps of my thoughts, that run
And leap and dance with gay delight
By Fancy's side, through shade and sun.

With parted lips and half-shut eyes,
Like some fair maiden in a swoon,
O'ercome with heat the morning lies
Breathless across the lap of noon.

A fleet of bees that floated by
Upon the golden waves of air,
With furléd sails at anchor lie
In flower-havens still and fair.

The winds are sleeping, but among
The pleasant tree-tops, green and high,
Zephyrs in leafy cages swung,
Like prisoned Peris, faintly sigh.

Down in the fields, slender and tall,
The corn in long lines stands abreast ;
One goodly stalk, like kingly Saul,
Shoulders and head above the rest.

Between the rows of corn and bean,
Round-bellied pumpkins loll at ease,
Sunning themselves ; and, lank and lean,
Amid the sleek full-podded peas,

Green gourds, with crooked necks and spines,
Thrust up their slender snake-like heads,
Or trail a poisonous coil of vines
Across the sweet-potato beds.

Drunken with wine and flushed with heat,
Under the arbor, with the vines
Tickling his bare and gouty feet,
Summer in stupid sleep reclines.

And Autumn now is on the way
To claim his rich inheritance ;
On the fair hills he stands to-day,
Sweeping the fields with his keen glance.

Until the grain grows riper still,
So let the longing reaper stand,
Impatiently with practiced skill
Shifting his scythe from hand to hand.

IDEALIZING.

WERE you a gentle Zephyr,
And I a Summer's Rose,
I would woo you to my bower—
You should kiss no other flower,
And when weary you should rest,
By my fragrant breath caressed,
Hidden deep within my breast :
Were you a Zephyr, darling,
And I a Summer's Rose.

WERE you the Wind of Autumn,
And I, your love, a Leaf,
From the home-tree I would sever,
And float with you forever
Down the Autumn's golden tide.
I would never, never chide,
For your maddest freak would be,
Summer zephyrs' soft to me :
Were you the Wind of Autumn,
And I, your love, a Leaf.

IF I were Queen of Summer,
And you were Winter's King,

I'd gather into posies
All my violets and roses,
All blossoms fresh and sweet,
And lay them at your feet,
At your cold and icy feet :
If I were Queen of Summer,
And you were Winter's King.

If I were Twilight's Lady,
And you were Lord of Day,
We would walk the dewy meadow
And mingle light and shadow ;
You would smooth my dusky hair,
I would kiss your brow so fair :
If I were Twilight's Lady,
And you were Lord of Day.

Were you the Ocean, darling,
And I, your love, a Star,
On your bosom I would glisten ;
I would bend me down and listen
To the great throbs of your heart ;
Light and wave would never part :
Were you the Ocean, darling,
And I, your love, a Star.

Were you the Present, darling,
And I, your fate, the Past,

Naught but olden, golden treasures,
Wrapped around with rosy pleasures,
Would I ever bring to thee ;
You would love to think of me :
Were you the Present, darling,
And I, your love, the Past.

MY FACTORY.

I LIVE in Good-will Kingdom,
And for twenty years or more
I have owned this model factory—
Just you step inside the door.
There are many unseen weavers
Busily at work within :
There are many wheels a-going,
But you hear no whirl or din.

See the Heart-wheel in the centre,
Large and strong, and never still,
With magnetic power moving
All the other wheels at will.
Love, the fairest of my weavers.
Turns this mighty wheel, my friend,
Weaving countless threads of beauty
That no human strength can rend.

Round this wheel, revolving swiftly,
Watch the wheels of Hope and Joy,
And the triple wheels of Duty
Busy in my life's employ.

How the weavers cheer each other,
And how quickly and how well
They obey Love's gentle orders,
It would take me long to tell.

In this high and spacious chamber,
With its windows paned with blue,
See the Brain-wheel, wheel of magic,
Weaving threads of every hue.
Thought, the wisest of my weavers,
At this wheel unwearied stands,
Until Sleep, with wary fingers,
Steals the distaff from her hands.

God upreared this noble structure—
'Twas a God-like gift and free—
And he put the wheels in motion
With this solemn charge to me :
"See you keep this building holy,
Fair without and fair within ;
Keep the wheels all bright and busy,
And your work unstained by sin."

But sometimes old Care, on crutches,
Hobbles in and clogs the wheels ;
And then Sloth, the cunning vagrant,
Follows close behind his heels,

With a loathsome breath of canker,
And, his wallet full of dust,
And, with stealthy step approaching,
Specks each idle wheel with rust.

And sometimes old Mother Gossip,
Gadding whither she doth choose,
On her way from Tittle-Tattle,
Saunters in to tell the news ;
And the giddy coquette, Pleasure,
On her way to Folly-town,
Stops to show her gaudy trinkets
And the fashion of her gown.

And sometimes poor, scowling Envy
Comes to tell me with a whine
That my neighbor owns a factory
Twice as large and fine as mine.
But these visitors come seldom,
And they do not tarry where
They must stand in mortal terror
Of my watchmen, Faith and Prayer.

So I'll live in peace and quiet,
And when anything goes wrong,
Or the days seem long and weary,
Take my harp and sing a song ;

For my weavers weave the faster,
And the wheels turn swifter round,
When I touch my harp with gladness
And awake a cheerful sound.

THE FOUR MANTLES.

WHEN first young Mother Nature
Gave birth to the Seasons four,
She straightway began, fond mother,
Their nakedness to deplore.

And when they were grown, one morning,
With shuttles of shine and shade,
Four mantles she wove for her children,
And four pretty hoods she made.

One mantle was purple, one mantle was golden,
And one, like the grass, was green,
And one was as white as the white hoar-frost
In the month of December seen.

Said Winter, "Since I am the oldest
And boldest, I claim, by might,
First choice from the pretty mantles."
Quoth Nature, "My son, you are right."

And over his burly shoulders
The mantle of white he threw;
Long icicles grew on the fringes,
And coldly the north wind blew—

It hailed, and it rained, and it thundèred,
And Winter cried out, "Oh, woe!
Whatever my mantle touches
It straightway turns to snow."

Next, Spring to her mother Nature
Came bounding with careless glee,
"The mantle of green, dear mother,
The mantle of green for me!"

And over her naked beauty
Of dimples and ivory skin
She blushingly drew it closely,
And under her rosy chin.

With musical peals of laughter
She fastened the cunning hood,
And fresh as a rose-bud picture
In an emerald frame she stood.

The news of her wondrous beauty
Spread quickly through all the land,
The birds came singing around her,
The zephyrs came wooing her, and

The hearts of the hills and valleys
Grew warmer, and stronger beat,
Each throb took the form of a flower,
And worshiped at her fair feet.

Poor Winter grew faint with envy,
And, frowning, he stole away,
And built him an icy palace
High up on the mountains gray.

Next, Summer, to choose her mantle,
Came up, with a languid grace :
"A princess I am, dear mother,
A princess in form and face :

"And surely this royal mantle
Of purple you wove for me,
To heighten my splendid beauty,
How well it becomes me ! See !"

And over her glowing bosom
And passionate heart it crept,
Till, veiling each ardent beauty,
In rich, heavy folds it swept.

Then over her graceful shoulders
She turned back the purple hood,
And warm as a dream of passion
In a southern clime she stood.

The breath from her lips of crimson
Stole warm through her heavy hair,
And filled with a subtle fragrance
The earth and the sky and air.

At sight of her rich ripe beauty
The pulse of the sun beat high ;
With passionate adoration
He worshiped her in the sky,

Till, burning with love and passion,
He parted the crimson west ;
And Summer, voluptuous beauty,
Was clasped to his glowing breast.

The news of the loving bridal
Flew swift round the world : the bee
Brought treasures of golden honey ;
And every fruit-bearing tree,

To add to the marriage supper,
Brought sweets ; and the tender vine
Came laden with purple flagons
Of sparkling, spicy wine.

Next over the hills and valleys,
By pleasant or rugged way,
Came Autumn, the dusky huntsman,
Singing a roundelay.

But hushing his ringing music,
And dropping his mellow horn,
He knelt at the feet of Nature,
Her humblest and youngest born.

"You only have asked my blessing—
Remembrance of this I will keep ;
Whatever is sown by your brother
And sisters, your hand shall reap.

"Lift up your head, son Autumn,
Tender, and true, and bold ;
I crown your bent brow with glory,
And give you this mantle of gold."

And over his dusky shoulders
The glittering robe she threw,
And over his crisp-brown ringlets
The bright golden hood she drew.

Then hasting to pay him honors,
The Earth, at his mother's sign,
Anointed him King of Harvest,
With oil, and spice, and wine.

Centuries ago this happened—
The world has grown old, they say,
And many have been the changes ;
But e'en to the present day

Poor Winter still shivers and grumbles,
And growls to himself each year ;
And perhaps you may see next Christmas
The mantle he has to wear.

And whatever Spring's mantle touches,
 It straightway turns to green ;
In April the delicate fringes,
 In May the whole robe, are seen.

And Summer, in royal purple,
 In June to the sun is wed ;
In August their marriage supper
 Of ripe, luscious fruit is spread.

And now 'tis the reign of Autumn,
 Look out on the fields, behold !
Whatever his mantle touches,
 It straightway turns to gold.

ONLY A HEART.

It is not a stone that will bruise, my lord,
Nor is it a serpent to sting;
A thorn to rend, a sword to pierce,
Or any vile, poisonous thing.

Only a heart, a woman's heart,
Step on it! crush it! so!
Bravely done like a gentleman,
Turn on your heel and go.

Only a heart! what harm is done?
Let it bleed in the dust and moan;
Or stifle its anguish as best it may,
Or stiffen my lord, into stone.

Only a heart! it was fresh and young
And tender and warm, I know;
As pure as the spirit of chastity,
My lord; and it loved you so!

But nothing is lost: let it die, my lord,
Let its death be quick or slow;
Such hearts are as plenty as summer leaves—
We find them wherever we go.

Only a heart ! do not fear, my lord,
Nobody on earth is near
To come to the cry of the wounded thing,
And God is too far to hear.

A CHIRP FROM MOTHER ROBIN.

SEE that little Mother Robin,
Sitting on her humble nest !
Learn from her my poem lesson,
Nature's teachers are the best.

Other nests are lined more softly—
Larger nests than hers she sees ;
Other nests are swinging higher
In the summer's gentle breeze.

But the Robin is contented ;
Mine is warm enough, she says,
Large enough to hold my birdies
Through their tender nestling days.

Smaller cradle, warmer cover !
For my little ones, she sings ;
Four there are, but see how snugly
They are tucked beneath my wings.

And I envy not my neighbors,
Red-bird, blue-bird, lark, or thrush ;
For the breeze that rocks the tree-tops
Rocks my cradle in the bush.

And the same bright sunshine warms me—
By the same kind hand I'm fed ;
With the same green earth around me,
And the same sky overhead.

Though my dress is something plainer
Than my cousin's, Madam Red ;
Though I wear no vest of crimson,
And no gay hood on my head ;

Still, my robe of graver colors
Suits my station and my nest ;
For the Master knew what costume
Would become a robin best.

WHAT THE SPARROW CHIRPS.

I ~~am~~ only a little sparrow,
A bird of low degree ;
My life is of little value,
But the dear Lord careth for me.

He gave ~~me~~ a coat of feathers,—
It is very plain, I know,
With never a speck of crimson,
For it was not made for show,—

But it keeps me warm in winter,
And it shields me from the rain ;
Were it bordered with gold or purple,
Perhaps it would make me vain.

And now that the spring-time cometh,
I will build me a little nest,
With many a chirp of pleasure,
In the spot I love the best.

And the Master will give me wisdom
To build it with leaves that are brown ;
Warm and soft it must be for my birdies,
And so I will line it with down.

I have no barn nor storehouse,
I neither sow nor reap ;
God gives me a sparrow's portion,
But never a seed to keep.

If my meal is sometimes scanty,
Close picking makes it sweet ;
I have always enough to feed me,
And " life is more than meat."

I know there are many sparrows,
All over the world we are found ;
But our Heavenly Father knoweth
When one of us falls to the ground.

Though small, we are never forgotten ;
Though weak, we are never afraid ;
For we know that the dear Lord keepeth
The life of the creatures he made.

I fly through the thickest forest,
I light on many a spray ;
I have no chart nor compass,
But I never lose my way.

And I fold my wings at twilight,
Wherever I happen to be ;
For the Father is always watching,
And no harm will come to me.

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THE THREE PHYSICIANS.

My soul was sick with a fever,
Born of the pain and fret
Of a cross that I bore in secret—
A grief I could not forget.

I counseled with mine acquaintance
And they sent for Doctor Mirth,
A popular man whose practice
Extends all over the earth.

“Ha! ha!” laughed the jolly Doctor,
“I see what you need by a glance :
Excitement! Madam, excitement!
The play-house, the fête, and the dance.”

So Folly and Fashion and Pleasure
Took turns by my side as nurse ;
And I followed the Doctor's counsel,
But rapidly I grew worse.

Then I sent for old Doctor Travel,
Who had just arrived in town ;
He came in a mighty hurry,
And had not time to sit down.

But he ordered my carriage quickly,
He counted the crowns in my purse,
And sent me away on a journey,
With Change for my only nurse.

I wandered from city to city,
I saw all there was to see,
And it took the whole of my fortune
To pay the Doctor his fee.

But my fever burned deeper and deeper,
All my friends and acquaintance fled
From the fiery breath of contagion—
My grievous malady spread.

I have hired the World's Physician,
And the rich man's Physician—"Go
And bring me the poor man's Doctor!"
I cried in my pain and woe.

Benevolent Doctor Patience
Came readily at my call,
For this Doctor has plenty of leisure—
His practice is so very small.

His good old Mother Religion,
Tender and true away,
And his beautiful Sister Mercy
Came with him, and night and day

He soothed me with patient kindness
Whenever I would complain,
And his touch was so cool and quiet,
It healed me of every pain.

Then he spoke of the Great Physician
From whom he had learned his art,
And bade me arise and seek him,
And praise him with grateful heart.

POOR AND PROUD.

"POOR and proud," I heard you say,
As you passed me by one day
In your gilded coach, while I
Walked to church with downcast eye.

And half in envy, half in scorn,
With pious carefulness that morn
You drew your silken robes away
When I kneeled by you to pray.

"Poor and proud"—yea, it is true !
Pride becomes me more than you.
You sold yourself for gold and land,
I gave my true heart with my hand.

Look upon your chosen king,
At your jeweled wedding ring !
Look upon my husband dear,
And the plain gold ring I wear.

Pale and sad your husband old
Sits and mumbles o'er his gold,
Hale and glad my chosen one
Works from rise to set of sun.

Which of us should prouder be
Of our fortune, Lady Dea?
Which of us would sooner slip
Wedding ring from finger tip?

Count the dresses which you wear,
Count your pearls and diamonds rare,
You would give them all away
For my little girl to-day.

Look out on your fields of wheat
Ripening in the summer's heat,
Brown and hardy as a Turk
See my eldest boy at work.

Which would yield you greater joy,
Fields of grain or sun-burnt boy?
Barren woman, like a dart
The question stings your hungry heart!

Proud you are of gold and lands,
Of your idle jeweled hands;
Proud I sit, a Love-crowned queen,
My honored king and babes between.

WAITING.

Down the golden shores of Sunset,
On the silver Twilight strand,
For my dark-eyed poet lover
I in dreamy waiting stand.

O'er the waters deep that part us,
In the fairy bark of Thought,
Winged with silken sails from Dreamland,
By the hand of Fancy wrought,

He is floating, floating softly,
Floating straight to love and me ;
Hark, the mellow, mellow music
Of his voice upon the sea !

Reason guides the fairy shallop,
But his heart-throbs dip it low ;
With a dreamy, dreamy motion
Rock it gently to and fro.

He has passed the shoals of Pleasure,
Though the sirens singing there
Sought to bind him to their bosoms
With their golden, golden hair.

And he brings a precious freightage,
Sparkling gems of poesy,
Gathered from the isles of Beauty,
And this wealth is all for me !

All for me ! his chaste, his chosen,
Standing by the Sunset land,
Like the spirit of a lily,
On the silver Twilight strand ?

THE CONTRAST.

You are a great rich Sunflower,
I am a Daisy poor ;
Why do you stand a-wooing
Here at my humble door ?

Go to the court of Nature,
And win you a stately bride,
With beauty, and wealth, and station,
To match with your birth and pride.

There is the Lady Tulip
Waiting in proud repose,
Dressed in the softest velvet—
Her royal cousin, Red Rose—

And there is the Princess Lily,
Tender and full of grace,
Ever toward your bower
Turning her haughty face.

I am only a peasant,
The ladies at court would scorn
To trail the hem of their garments
O'er flower so humbly born !

“Not for your beauty, Daisy,
Not for your wealth or birth,
Nor for your station, Daisy,
But for your modest worth.”

So men of the Sunflower spirit,
Seeking the wide world through,
Mate with the Daisy women—
Simple, and sweet, and true.

WHISTLING UP THE SUMMER.

HARK how the wild birds whistle!
Whistling down the spring,
Whistling up the summer;
What will the summer bring?

Mocking-bird, jay, and robin,
Sparrow, and wren, and thrush,
Partridge and yellow-hammer,
Whistlers of the brush.

Whistling all together,
Whistle the air, and hark!
A sparkling, dewy tenor
Is trilled by the skyey lark.

Whistling up the summer—
Oh, how the whistles ring!
God's whistlers whistle sweeter
Than his sweetest singers sing.

Whistling up the summer—
Perfect the tune and time;
The singer can only follow
With musical tinkles of rhyme.

Whistle, and whistle, and whistle,
Tinkle and tinkle, so!
Under, around, and high-over,
Whistle and tinkle go.

Down in the meadow plowing,
Reuben has caught the tune;
He whistles it loud and blithely—
His wedding-day comes with June.

Over the hill his sweetheart
Sits at the homely loom,
Her feet beating time to the music,
Her fingers a-weaving bloom.

Whistling up the summer—
What can the summer bring
Whiter than wedding favors,
Brighter than wedding ring!

MARCH MONTH.

Now the blood begins to quicken
In the cool blue veins of Spring ;
Now's the time for birds to couple,
And for rural bards to sing.

Through the March lands, bold and naked,
Budding Beauty runs to day ;
She will clothe herself in April,
And grow shy and blush in May.

What's the use of all this reading ?
Not a line is understood ;
I cannot keep my heart from heeding
All the new sounds in the wood.

On the hills the herds are ringing
Tinkling music on their bells ;
And the happy rills are singing
Jubilantly through the dells.

Out upon you ! grim old Gibbon,
Striving hard to make me wise,
Scowling at me from these pages ;
Fresher knowledge round me lies.

And God sends me truer wisdom,
As he sent Elijah bread,
By the birds that soar and circle
In the blue sky overhead.

Now I care more for the building
Of the field-lark's humble home,
Than I do about the raising
Of the walls of ancient Rome.

MARCH FREAKS.

MARCH the Wizard beckons to me—

I am March's own dear child,
Heir to all his mad caprices,
Just as weird and just as wild.

Forth I go, a fair-haired gypsy,
Free to wander where I will,
And to pitch the tent of Fancy
By the rill, or on the hill.

Ah! the early roses know me,
Forth they stretch their tender palms;
I must read their happy fortunes
And receive their fragrant alms.

Now with wild-eyed Inspiration
Up the breezy hill I climb—
Then go floating down the streamlet
In the airy bark of Rhyme.

On my long-maned elfish pony,
Lightly reined by gloveless hand,
With the sun I ride a tourney
Round and round the pleasant land.

Like a cautious, wily fowler,
Through the fields I walk along,
Till I snare the whistling partridge
In the shining net of Song.

Friendly burs and Spanish-needles
By my dresses' hem are caught ;
Rambling brambles try to trip me,
And get tangled in my thought.

Oh, this wild, fresh life in March-month !
How it quickens all my blood !
How it sets my cheek to blushing
Redder than the maple-bud !

How it makes my breath come quicker
Through my red lips, fresh and sweet !
Sets my madcap heart to beating
Tabor dances for my feet !

Now the March-winds talk in whispers,
And the day is nearly spent ;
Sunset birds are flying homeward,
And the gypsy strikes her tent.

MANY PEOPLE.

IN the world are many people ;
Some are plain, and some are fair,
Some ride swiftly on with pleasure,
Some walk slowly on with care.

Many people, coming, going,
Rich and poor, and great and small,
Loving, hating, blessing, cursing,
Who but God can count them all?

Many people, many people,
With possessions spreading wide,
Thinking earth too mean a footstool
For their grandeur and their pride.

But for all these many people
There is only one small way,
Cold and damp, where sooner, later,
All the many feet must stray.

But for all these many people
There is only one small bed ;
Two grave-stones that fall and crumble,
One at foot and one at head.

OUT IN THE RAIN.

I.

LITTLE bird out in the rain,
How can you be so gay—
Singing in winter-time
The song that you sang in May?

II.

“ True, I am out in the rain,
And my feathers are most wet through;
But what is the use to complain?
I have something far better to do.

III.

“ For Song is a precious gift,
God gave it to me, you know,
And love makes me sing to him
Through sunshine, or rain, or snow.

IV.

“ My breakfast was only a crumb,
But a small portion does for me,
And the Master will always provide;
So I keep singing on, you see.

v.

"And what if it rains all day?
To-morrow the sky will be clear;
God gives us more smiles than frowns,
More sunshine than rain through the year.

vi.

"And what if it rains all night?
I know that between the drops
I can catch a short wink of sleep,
Here under the cedar-tops.

vii.

"For, though I am only a bird,
There is something God put in my breast
That tells me he cares for me,
Whatever he does is best."

viii.

Oh, sad heart out in the rain,
Rebuked by a little bird,
High over your present pain,
Like his, let your song be heard!

A MAY POEM.

TO MY LITTLE FRIEND ADA HOLCOMBE.

"COME and tell me when May holds court,"
I said to a little bird ;
But he flew away to his sweetheart,
And I did not think he heard.

This morning the bird came singing,
Decked out in a new blue vest :
"Wake quickly, my little lady,
And dress yourself in your best.

"Hear the music and see the banners !
Queen April is dead ; and May,
Our Lady of Love and Beauty,
Is queen of the world to-day."

I sprang from my drowsy couch—
"But what shall I wear?" I cried ;
"My gowns they are all old-fashioned,
Too dark, and too coarse beside."

With kindness, the list'ning flowers
Threw open their wardrobes wide,
And showed me their new spring dresses
With glances and words of pride.

"I will lend you my robe," said the Rose ;

"It is very becoming to me—

How lucky you're small in stature,

It fits to a T!" said she.

"I will lend you my hood," said the Pink ;

"It is ruffled and trimmed with lace,

My good mother Nature made it,

And I wore it to see Her Grace.

"There! turn your head round a little—

A trifle too small, I confess,

But pink is a charming color,

And matches your lips and dress."

"I will lend you my gloves," said the Lily,

"And my 'kerchief at your command ;"

"I 'll perfume them for you," said the Violet,

Taking them from my hand.

"I will lend you my fan," said the Fern ;

"We will lend you our slippers of green,"

Said two Heart Leaves, lifting my dainty skirt

And fitting them on unseen.

"But what if I get them dusty?"

"You may ride in my coach if you please,"

Drawled the lazy, but kind and obliging Snail,

Stretched out on the ground at his ease.

"I'll brush out the coach," said the Broom-straw ;

"I'll gild it," the Marigold cried ;

"I'll cushion the seats," said the Moss ;

"I'll fringe them," the Grass replied.

"I'll spin the reins," said the Spider ;

"And I'll make the dainty shaft

And the wheels with my magic saw and plane,"

The Bumble-Bee Carpenter laughed.

"I'll lend you my whip," said the Coach-Whip,

"It is small, but of double-ply ;"

"And here are your ready and willing steeds,"

Said two Rear-Horses prancing by.

"And here is a ready driver ;

I'm careful, and light, and spry" :

And the Cricket hopped up on the driver's seat

And flourished the whip on high.

"Since I am a man of fashion,

And change my coat every day,"

With a bow said the dandy Chameleon,

"Let me be your escort I pray."

"The Chameleon's too young and foppish,

You had better choose me," said the Toad,

As he shook his fat sides with laughter,

"To gallant you along the road."

"But what if I lose the way?"

"Why, I'll be your guide," buzzed the Bee,
"I'm a favorite with her Majesty,
And the steward of her house," said he.

"But what if I get belated,
And the night should be dark and damp?"
Said the Firefly, shading her eyes from the sun,
"I will lend you my magic lamp."

"Make haste to be off," said the Thyme,
"The hand of my watch points to eight;"
"Her watch is too slow," said the Sunflower,
"Already I fear you are late."

"Give my compliments to the Queen,
And the Ladyes and Lords of State,"
Said old Grandfather Long-Legs, limping away,
To open the garden gate.

Then into my coach I stepped,
And bidding my friends good-day,
'Mid cheers and good wishes away I rode,
Away to the Court of May.

THE COURT.

IN the Golden Land of Sunshine,
Near the Silvery Land of Dew,
Where the air is pure and fragrant
And the skies are always blue—

Where on every bush a minstrel
Tuned his pipe and caroled free,
And enchanted harps swung lightly
From the boughs of every tree—

Not within a lordly castle,
But beneath a tent of green,
In a golden robe of glory,
Stood fair May, the reigning Queen.

O'er her snowy neck and bosom
Fell her flowing golden hair,
And a rosy crown of pleasure
Rested on her forehead fair.

By her side, like maids of honor,
With their blushing rosy cheeks,
Scarlet lips and eyes of azure,
Stood the four fair smiling Weeks.

Round the court, equipped for duty,
Thirty noble courier Days,
With their snowy plumes stood waiting,
Lighter footed than the fays.

One had left the court that morning,
At her Majesty's command,
To unfurl her rosy banner
Over all the happy land.

And her merry laughing pages,
Rosy Hours, came and went
Through the graceful flowing curtains
Of the airy royal tent.

On his horn her Herald, Echo,
Sounded loud, and sweet, and clear,
And a host of royal subjects
Quickly came from far and near.

From her castle in the forest
Came the Princess of the Woods,
With a train of gay attendants,
Dressed in emerald cloaks and hoods.

From her crown of morning-glories
Waved a long and graceful plume,
Like the lily in its fairness,
Like the apple in perfume.

Here and there a bird's bright feather,
Quaintly woven in between
Rows of shining leaves and berries,
Decked her robe of olive-green.

Tinkling blue-bells fringed her kirtle,
Cast in different shapes and climes,
And at every graceful motion
Filled the air with dainty chimes.

From her distant coral palace,
In the Kingdom of the Sea,
Came the Princess of the Waters
With her fair hair waving free.

O'er her head a veil of azure
Rose and floated like the sail
Of a happy ship, when playing
Hide-and-seek with wave and gale.

From her waist a scarf of crimson
Fell in many a freakish twist,
Down the soft and quiet foldings
Of her silvery robe of mist.

From her shell-embroidered girdle
Hung the shining, magic keys
That unlocked the jewel caskets
Of the rivers and the seas.

Lilliputian Lords and Ladyes
Came from happy Elfin-land—
Nymphs, and Gnomes, and bonny Brownies,
Gayly trooping hand in hand.

Oberon, the King of Fairies,
Merry Puck, with all his crew,
Came, with mimic swords and lances,
And on mimic bugles blew.

'Neath the tree where, full of wonder,
Safely hidden I had kept,
Last of all, with smiles and blushes,
From my fairy coach I stepped.

"Who are you, my bonny maiden?
In what country do you dwell?"
Said Queen May, with gracious kindness,
As her glances on me fell.

"I'm a little wildwood singer,
Humblest of all the throng,
May it please your Royal Highness,
From the tuneful land of Song.

"All my life with joy and wonder,
Bending down from tree or stalk,
I have heard the blooming flowers
In my little garden talk

“To themselves, and to the insects
That around them work or sport,
Of your glory and your beauty,
And the splendor of your court.

“And I longed to see you greatly,
But I could not find the way
Till the flowers and the insects
Kindly lent their aid to-day.”

“You are welcome, little maiden,
All are welcome to my court,
Rise, and join the merry minstrels
And the fairies in their sport.”

With the royal guests I feasted,
Danced with fairy and with gnome,
Till the Cricket chirped in whispers,
“It is time to start for home.”

Then the Queen gave me her blessing,
And she bade me go and sing
Unto all her loving subjects
Of the glory of the Spring.

LITTLE LAMPS AND LITTLE FOLKS.

At the door of his leafy palace
A Fire-fly one night
Stood trimming his little lantern,
And watching the stars so bright.

"What large, splendid lamps they carry,
While mine is so small and dim!
What good does it do, I wonder?
And why was it lit by him?"

"I polish it every morning,
And I trim it every night;
But 'tis scarcely worth the trouble,
It gives such a feeble light."

And he turned to the Fire-fly lady,
With a buzz of discontent;
She paused in her household duties
To list to her lord's lament.

"My lamp," said the bright little lady,
"Is dimmer than yours, but I
Ne'er wish for the flaming lanterns
That shine in the far-off sky.

"It is bright enough for my using,
For it lights up our little home ;
And it cheers you to see it shining
When far in the dark you roam."

Just then on the leaf-roof slanting
A large, heavy, drop of rain
Fell, rocking the little palace,
Till 'twas almost rent in twain.

They peeped through the open window,
All the star-lamps had gone out,
And the wind, with its wide wings open,
Was fanning the clouds about.

"Our neighbors, the ant and beetle,
Passed late by our door to-day
To glean in the grassy meadow ;
I am sure they have lost the way.

"I must hasten to guide them safely :
At the window, love, remain,"
Said the lord of the little palace,
"To light me back home again."

Then trimming his lantern quickly,
He covered it close with his wing,
And flew through the rain and darkness,
Borne up by the All-Seeing.

He flew to the North, and flew to the South,
And flew to the East and West,
Till he found the poor blind beetle
Ensnared in a spider's nest.

And the little red ant was swimming
Half drowned through a drop of rain ;
But he stood on the nearest landing,
And lighted him o'er the main.

Then flashing his lantern brightly,
He guided them on their way,
Till he came to the kingdom of beetles,
And the village of ants that lay

Ten steps from the fire-fly city ;
Then, bidding them both adieu,
Straight home to the lighted window—
To his lady love he flew.

THE SURRENDER.

KING DAY and his court have grown weary,
The gates of his castle are barred,
And Sunset, the Warden, is keeping
A careless and drowsy guard.

The purple and golden banners,
That floated in gorgeous array
From the tops of the Western towers,
Are furled and fading away.

And, over the silvery turrets,
And over the roseate walls,
And the ancient golden draw-bridge,
The shadow of Twilight falls.

And, as it grows deeper, the Warden
Abandons the Western height,
And the beautiful Castle of Daylight
Surrenders itself to Night.

No footstep is heard on the terrace,
Or stair, and the banqueting hall
Where the King held his riotous wassail
Is silenter now than all.

The tongue of Contention is palsied,
The anvil of Labor is dumb,
And Clamor has grown too feeble
To rattle his noisy drum.

Below from the spacious court-yard
There comes neither stir nor tone;
The King in the royal chamber
Has fallen to sleep on his throne.

His light golden crown of sunbeams-
Has melted away from his head,
And his brow bent heavily downward
Seems crowned with a crown of lead;

His sceptre of Light has faded
And slipped from his open hand;
Vainly in dreams he mutters
Some idle and vague command;

For his ministers, Thought and Action,
From morning till even-tide
His busy and loyal subjects,
Sleep heavily by his side.

And his gray-bearded secretary,
That very old servant, Lord Care,
With the wrinkles and stooping shoulders,
Nods peacefully in his chair.

The whole of the court is sleeping—
Even the favorite fool,
Poor Folly, snores loud and soundly,
His head on the King's footstool.

No sound but of heavy breathing
Is heard through the stately room ;
From basement to tower the castle
Is wrapped in a slumberous gloom.

And the eyes of my muse grow drowsy,
The lips of my muse grow mute,
And the heart of my muse is dreaming
Over her slumbering lute.

MEUM.

Now the learned folk are saying—

“Give your harp another string,
For we know you by your playing,
Though you hide yourself to sing.”

But I answer, little caring

What the learned people say—
“Nature made the poet daring,
I will sing my own wild way.”

Every star has its own splendor ;

And we know the fixed and bright
From the tremulous and tender,
By the crowns they wear at night.

By its scent we know the myrtle

From the lily, in the dark ;
By its voice we know the turtle
In the thicket from the lark.

Every tree has its own flower ;

Every bird its own wood-note,
Sweet and low, or full of power,
Made to fit its own soft throat.

So with every human singer ;
And upon the bells of Rhyme,
Each harmonious bell-ringer
Rings his own melodious chime.

And we know whose heart is singing,
Though the music falls or swells ;
And we know whose hand is ringing,
Though it only tap the bells.

TOO GLAD TO SING.

AND now 'tis fairly Spring again—
The swallows sing, and rise and dip ;
And, helped by sunshine and by rain,
The longing buds to green leaves slip.

Now, like all happy things I find,
I shape my life by one sweet law,
And tender thoughts to'ard all my kind
Burst into blossom with the haw.

My heart grows fuller with the rill,
And leaps and dances all the way,
High over care and every ill,
From April to the month of May.

And loving God for all the good
That fills my life up to the brim,
I stole into the pleasant wood,
And made a song to sing to him.

But some quick wild-bird was about,
And bore it off on joyful wing ;
This morn, before the stars went out,
I heard him sing it to the King.

Wild-bird, the song was truly sung,
With tender pauses in each line ;
And though 'twas trilled by thy sweet tongue,
The King knew that the words were mine.

All songs the wild-birds sing in Spring
Are stolen from some poet's store,
Whose heart is all too glad to sing,
Or, it may be, too sad and sore.

Mine is too glad—silent I sit,
Content that birds should sing for me,
Or let my happy fancies flit
Voiceless with them from tree to tree.

HEART OF STONE.

I.

YOUR heart has looked at a Gorgon's head,
And turned to bloodless stone—
Better for me had I been dead
Before this truth were known
Heart of stone,
Hard heart of stone !

II.

You found a heart of flesh and blood,
Tender and warm and true—
A pure young heart just in the bud,
That sought to bloom for you.

III.

To pierce this heart you shaped a dart ;
Ere you let the arrow fly,
You dipped the barb with cunning art
In the poison of a lie.

IV.

The lie was this—"I love you, dear ;"
The sweetest, bitterest lie
That a man may speak and a woman hear
Under God's truthful sky.

V.

It rankles deep and it rankles long,
This arrow that you sped ;
The poison taints my sweetest song,
And the wound gapes sore and red.

VI.

But no cry is heard, no tear is shed,
No sign of weakness shown ;
My hand would strike my proud heart dead
If it should dare to moan,
Heart of stone,
Hard heart of stone !

FOR THE LOVE OF LADY MAY.

THE reign of Winter is over,
And I see Lord March to-day
With a magic compass in his hands
Surveying all the rightful lands
Of his love, the Lady May.

Gladly I watch him running
His golden line this way ;
Of North and South, and East and West,
He will claim the fairest and the best
In the name of Lady May.

Quickly each line he measures ;
Then dropping the magic chart,
All for love of the Lady May,
He toils by night and he toils by day,
Proudly and light of heart.

From her court she sent him, saying :
"Go till my land for me ;
And when I come, if I find it fair,
Budding and blossoming everywhere,
My bridegroom you shall be."

All for love of his Lady,
His strong white arm disbands
Each wild-eyed tribe, and lawless clan
Of weeds and brambles, that o'erran
And tented upon her lands ;

Briers, and burs, and thistles,
He clears them all away ;
They pierce and sting, but he does not feel,
His feet are brass and his hands are steel,
For the love of Lady May.

Up on the rugged hill-tops,
Down in the plains below,
His royal plow, the Sunshine, now
He guides with flushed and heated brow,
Carefully and slow.

“ Hard little hearts, grow tender,
And throb for my Lady fair ”—
And he gives the earth the earthly kind,
But the winged seed he gives to the wind
To sow in the fields of air.

“ The ground must be smooth and mellow,
Or hard little hearts will cheat,”
And over his Lady's wide domain
He runs with his shining harrow, Rain,
Till he feels them stir and beat.

“Ho, March!” I call from my window,
“You are wearing grace away,
You are growing old, you are growing gruff,
Your back is bent and your face is rough,
For the love of Lady May!”

“Willingly I grow double—
Willingly I grow gray;
There is nothing that I would not bear,
There is nothing that I would not dare,
For the love of Lady May!”

“But what of the young Lord April
You left, at the court with May?
He will kiss her cheek, he will kiss her hand,
While your Lordship tills the Lady’s land
Full a thousand leagues away.”

“Ho, Poet!” he answers sharply,
“’Tis a bold false thing you say,
Though the young Lord April press his suit,
I will stake my life against your lute,
On the truth of Lady May.”

THE PRINCE OF SPLENDOR.

Ho, Poet with the harp of Praise,
And fingers light and slender,
Lo ! with a host of shining days
There comes the Prince of Splendor.

God's chosen month of all the twelve,
The wise, the good, the sober—
Who ne'er was born to dig and delve,
The Joseph-like October !

Down in the quiet vales I hear
This glorious new-comer,
Interpreting unto the Year
The dreams of Spring and Summer.

And in the busy fields I see
His golden chariot gliding,
And hear the sheaves cry, "Bow the knee !"
Where'er the Prince comes riding.

And now upon the hills he stands,
In colors warm and glowing ;
Through all the lands, with willing hands,
His gathered grain bestowing.

A kinder Hand than Jacob's threw
That gorgeous robe around him !
A greater King than Egypt knew
With all this glory crowned him !

Ho, Artist ! to the woods away,
To meet this Prince of Splendor,
And paint his features while you may,
In colors rich and tender.

THE GOOD SAMARITAN.

CRUELLY beaten with many stripes,
Cast out on the world's highway
By the hand that it honored and loved the most,
The heart of a woman lay.

Robbed of its treasures of Youth and Love ;
Its beautiful raiment of Trust
Rent in twain by the spoiler's hand,
And soiled with the blood and dust.

Writhing with pain 'neath the noonday's heat,
Too feeble to moan or to cry,
Despised, forsaken, and scorned by all—
It only cared to die.

And Pride, by chance, like the Jewish priest,
Came down where the poor heart lay ;
But seeing the wounds from afar, he turned,
And went by another way.

And Hope, like the Levite, came and looked,
Then faintly the weak heart cried,
And prayed for help from its early friend—
Hope passed on the other side.

But Song, like the good Samaritan,
Was kind to this woman's heart,
Bound up its wounds with a tender hand,
And healed it in every part.

And, sitting low at the feet of Song,
This sad heart learned to sing
Such beautiful, heavenly melodies,
That they reached the ear of the King.

And calling this poor, forsaken heart,
With Song God bade it go
And bind up the broken and bruised who faint
In the world's wide Jericho.

WHEN SOMETHING IN LIFE IS WRONG.

HIGH over the scented stacks of hay,
And the shining rows of grain,
The lark is thrilling, while yet he may,
The tender heart of the gracious day
With joy by his rapturous strain.

But what recks the girl in the country lane
Of the lark or the lark's glad hymn?
Since never again, though her life be long,
From her thirsty heart will the fount of song
Gush over her sweet lips' brim.

Look under, look over, and far away,
The earth, like a queen, wears gold;
And royal banners float over the sky
From gray cloud-castles, wide and high,
Of purple and crimson fold.

But what cares the girl in the setting sun
For glory of earth or sky?
The glory of womanhood, Love, to-day,
From the sky of her young life faded away,
And she only cares to die.

Ah! Autumn is golden, and Spring is green,
And Summer is sweet and long;
But what care we in our discontent,
For the earth's adornment, hue and scent,
When something in life is wrong?

THE JOURNEY OF DAY.

FROM the golden Sunrise-castle

In the kingdom of the East,
With the balm of love anointed
By Nature's great High Priest,

Comes the young King Day, rejoicing,
On his nimble charger, Light,
Down the gloomy road of Darkness,
Paved with foot-prints of the Night.

See! adown the road before him,
With her grayish mantle drawn
Half coquettishly around her,
Flies the rosy-footed Dawn—

With the silvery keys of Daylight
To unlock the gates of Mist,
And the heavy gates of Shadow,
With their double bolts; and list,

Round the silent court of Slumber
How she sounds her bugle clear,
With a silvery note of warning,
That his majesty is near!

Now the heavy gates are opened
By the wakeful warden, Dream ;
And the Day, in all his glory,
Passes through them, while the gleam

Of his golden sunbeam armor
Shines through all the land of Sleep,
And the wild, fantastic Visions
Hide themselves and silence keep.

See ! his virgin Queen, the Morning,
In a robe of rosy hue,
Guides her pearly car of Freshness
With its diamond wheels of dew,

Close beside her Royal Consort ;
And her voice is blithe and sweet,
As she tells him of the flowers,
Birds, and zephyrs she will meet

As she drives her chariot onward ;
While her lazy sister, Noon,
Rubs her drowsy eyelids, yawning,
“ I was wakened all too soon

“ For this long and weary journey ;
Surely, sister, you must know,
In this languid summer weather,
That my pulse beats something slow.”

But the younger sister, Evening,
With a cool and quiet hand
Soothes the warm, impatient speaker.
So they journey through the land :

Through the North and South they travel,
Never pausing once to rest
Till they reach the Sunset-castle
In the kingdom of the West.

THE LITTLE LOOM.

THERE'S a little loom a-going
Out there in the mid-day sun ;
A spider is the weaver,
And her task is just begun.

The thread that this weaver weaveth
Is spun by a magic wheel,
God put in her little body,
With noiseless spindle and reel ;

And fine enough in its texture
For high-born lady or queen
Is the thread that the spider weaveth,
With the sunshine in between.

I look at the patient worker,
And wonder, and wonder if she—
Though only a homely spider—
A lesson can teach to me.

She never grows cross, nor weary,
While weaving the airy lace,
Nor tangles the thread as I would do
Were I in the spider's place ;

She never goes forth to gossip,
Or tattle of any one,
And never from house to house to see
How her neighbor's thread is spun.

But just like the careful woman,
Who was not afraid of the snow,
Whose household was clothed in scarlet,
Is the spider out there I know.

She is weaving a fairy castle,
Whose pillars are based on air,
And round and about the castle
She windeth a charmed stair.

And to-night, when the worker sleepeth,
The hand of the fairy Dew
Will frame all the doors and windows
With diamonds, and looking through

The jeweled and airy casements
At sunrise, her thought will be:
"How strange such a beautiful structure
Was reared by plain little me!"

Oh, homely and patient woman,
A beautiful truth is there:
*The worker may be both small and plain,
Yet the work be great and fair.*

THE LAST MILESTONES.

SIXTY years through shine and shadow—

Sixty years, my gentle wife,
You and I have walked together
Down the rugged road of life.
From the hills of Spring we started,
And through all the Summer-land,
And the fruitful Autumn country,
We have journeyed hand in hand.

We have borne the heat and burden,
Toiling painfully and slow ;
We have gathered in our harvest,
With rejoicing, long ago.
Leave the uplands for our children,
They are strong to sow and reap ;
Through the quiet Winter lowlands
Our level way we keep.

'Tis a dreary country, darling,
You and I are passing through ;
But the road lies straight before us,
And the miles are short and few ;

No more dangers to encounter—
No more hills to climb, true friend,
Nothing now but level walking,
Till we reach our journey's end.

We have had our time of gladness ;
'Twas a proud and happy day,
Ah ! the proudest of our journey,
When we felt that we could say,
Of the children God had given,
Looking fondly on the ten,
"Lovely women are our daughters,
Our sons are noble men !"

We have had our time of sorrow—
Our time of anxious fears,
When we could not see the milestones
Through the blindness of our tears.
In the sunny Summer country,
Far behind us little May
And Willie, too, grew weary,
And we left them on the way.

Are you looking backward, mother,
That you stumble in the snow ?
I am still your guide and staff, dear,
Lean your weight upon me, so !

Our road is growing narrow ;
And, what is it, wife, you say ?
Yes ! I know our eyes are dim, dear,
But we have not lost the way.

Cheer thee ! cheer thee, faithful-hearted !
Just a little way before
Lies the great Eternal City
Of the King whom we adore.
I can see the shining spires ;
And the King, the King, my dear,
We have served him long and humbly ;
He will bless us, do not fear.

Ah ! the snow falls fast and heavy,
How you shiver with the cold !
Let me wrap your mantle closer,
And my arm around you fold.
We are weak, and faint, and weary,
And the sun low in the west.
We have reached the gates, my darling,
Let us tarry here and rest.

THRENODIA.

I FOUND my love in April,
I lost my love in May ;
With the buds he came to seek me,
Ere they bloomed he went away,
And I care not for the flowers
Nor for anything in May.

When he went he kissed me, saying,
“ 'Tis a little short farewell !”
But the summer will not bring him,
And the winter will not bring him,
Though it ring the funeral knell
Of a fond and true heart broken,
By “ a little short farewell.”

All the roses see me weeping,
And they try to comfort me ;
But they only make me sadder,
Make me weep the more to see
That the roses love me better
And are faithfuler than he.

Ah! for me there is no comfort,
And for me there is no May;
For 'tis love that makes the seasons
In a woman's heart alway—
Faithless love brings drear December,
Faithful love brings rosy May.

THE MORNING CALL.

A LAY OF THE NEW YEAR.

GOOD-MORNING, young New Year !

I'm glad you stepped in,
For friends are as scant
As the beard on your chin.

Your steeds, East and West Wind,
And Ice car of state,
With North Wind, your driver,
Can wait at the gate.

I will close the hall door
'Gainst your reveling crew,
For I've something to say, sir,
In private to you.

I called at your Court, sir,
Quite early this morn ;
In truth, just as soon
As I heard you were born.

But your Minister. Joy,
And Prime Minister, Mirth,
Were drinking deep cups
To your Majesty's birth.

And your noisy Pages,
Wit, Laughter, and Jest,
Made sport of the garments
In which I was drest.

And Pleasure, your mistress,
With scorn in her eye,
And simpering Folly
Passed flauntingly by.

While Pride, your crown-bearer,
Scarce gave me a glance ;
And Music was playing
A quadrille for dance.

The whole Court was crazy,
I saw very plain ;
For I called, and I shouted,
And plead all in vain.

Not one of your household
Would stir from his place,
To bear either letter
Or word to your Grace.

And I feared you would travel
The length of the land,
And never give me, sir,
A shake of the hand.

Here sit down beside me,
There's room here for two ;
Your father drank with me,
Pray why may not you ?

Here's health to your Grace,
And a prosperous reign :
And ne'er may your subjects
Ask favors in vain !

Here's health to your Grace !
May we never have cause
To complain of your tax,
Or rebel 'gainst your laws !

At your age, young New Year,
Your father and I
Were very good friends, sir.
How fast the days fly !

It seems scarce a month, sir,
Since over this bowl
We drank to each other—
God pity his soul !

A fine ear for music,
A taste for good rhyme,
Your old father had
In the days of his prime.

And, striking my lyre,
I sang in his praise :
The King of Three Hundred
And Sixty-five Days !

I praised his large army
Of Minutes and Hours ;
His fleet-footed Seconds,
His strong Icy towers ;

His great fleet of Icebergs
That sailed the North Sea—
His high forts of Snow—
And his artillery

Of angry Volcanoes
That thundered his fame
From the ramparts of Andes
With voices of flame.

Till growing enraptured, sir,
Over his wine,
He said that whatever
I asked should be mine—

Were't half of his kingdom,
Or half of his wealth ;
So swore the Old Year
As he drank to my health.

A good, faithful subject,
I served the old King
Through his Winter campaign
And his triumph in Spring.

And "hand in glove" friends, sir,
We were till one day,
When June was fulfilling
The bright hopes of May,

I talked to the flower—
And I talked to the dove—
And seeking your father,
I asked him for Love.

But he turned on his heel,
And he laughed loud and long :
" You Poets are dreamers,
Content ye with Song ! "

I haunted his Court, sir,
And, day after day,
I sighed my petition,
And he answered, nay.

But last night the Old Year
Repented in death,
And asked my forgiveness ;
And with his last breath

He bade me seek you, sir ;
 “ My son and my heir ”—
So he said, “ will deal fairly
 With you, never fear.”

What say you, King New Year ?
 “ His debts are not yours ?
You’ve something to do
 Besides settling old scores ?

“ You pledge me your honor,
 By hand and by ring,
My wish shall be granted
 When your heir is King.

“ You hope I can wait, sir ?
 You’re sorry ? ” so, so :
That’s all, it amounts to—
 What ! rising to go ?

“ Your steeds are impatient,
 You’re needed at Court
On matters of state,
 And to join in the sport ! ”

Well, well, so the world goes,
 Each year puts us off
With an unfulfilled promise,
 With laugh and with scoff.

Come, Love, when you will,
I shall seek you no more,
Nor hasten to rise
When you knock at my door.

Come, Love, when you will,
Be it right, be it wrong,
I will take up my harp
And content me with Song.

A WHISTLING POEM.

WHISTLING through the corn-field,
Whistling a merry air,
My feet are deep in the pea-vines,
And tangles are in my hair.

Old folks say 'tis unlucky
For maidens to whistle ; still,
Life is a rugged country,
And whistling helps up-hill.

And whenever my heart is happy,
A whistle is sure to slip
Cheery, and sweet, and mellow,
Over my rosy lip.

Ho ! maiden with stiffy manners,
And lips looking prim and tart,
Far back in the days of childhood
Your teacher was prudish Art.

But I went to school to Nature,
And e'er in my class stood high ;
The birds were my merry classmates ;
They whistle, and why not I ?

And what if I sometimes whistle,
For that will you cry out shame?
For that am I less pure-hearted?
Less womanly? much to blame?

No! I'll whistle when I have a mind to,
I'll whistle out loud and clear,
I'll whistle up hope and courage,
And whistle down grief and fear.

I'll whistle when clouds are murky,
And whistle when skies are blue;
I'll whistle when friends prove traitors,
And whistle when friends prove true.

And I'll whistle, and whistle, and whistle,
All through the field of corn;
I'll whistle at noon, and whistle at night,
And whistle at early morn.

And whistling, whistling, whistling,
I'll whistle my own way through,
And whistling, whistling, whistling,
I'll whistle this song at you.

THE SINGING HEART.

GOD made my heart a singing heart,
Because he knew that I
Would be a creature set apart
For pain or pleasures high.

He knew my life would need a strain
Of music all along ;
And gave me with great earthly pain
The heavenly gift of Song.

I was the merriest child of all
The children that I knew ;
But timid wild things knew my call,
For I was gentle too.

An ignorant child—Latin and Greek
Were unknown tongues to me ;
But I was quick to catch and speak
The tongue of flower and bee.

And when in spring with solemn face
Others gave thanks in words,
For meat and drink, my heart said grace
For flowers and for birds.

Toled on by brook or bird or bee,
I roamed the piny woods
With heart as wild and step as free
As roving Robin Hood's.

I did not know what made me care
For God and Nature so,
Nor why I thought his world so fair
And good ; but now I know—

My heart was singing all the time
Sweet songs into my ear ;
But free to run and skip and climb,
I was too glad to hear.

And when my happy spirit caught
The first soft notes, they seemed
So sweet and far away I thought
'Twas music I had dreamed.

But when my childhood's budding May
Bloomed into girlhood's June,
The singing heart burst out one day
Into a perfect tune.

The world has bruised the singing heart,
It has wept tears like dew ;
And Slander, with a poisoned dart,
Has pierced it through and through.



But singing hearts are hard to kill,
And God made mine with wings,
To fly above all earthly ill ;
And so it lives and sings.

CORNSTALKS.

IN the pleasant month of April,
Just at sunrise, we were born
Little Princes of the Royal,
Good old line of Indian-Corn.

Soon the pleasant pain of growing
Thrilled and tingled through our nerves,
Our leaves began to rustle
And to wave in graceful curves.

We grew faster than the barley,
We grew taller than the rye ;
And we grew up with the blessing
Of the earth, the air, and sky.

On the hills and in the lowlands
There was nothing we could see
Half so green, or half so blithesome,
Or so fresh at heart, as we.

Oh the bliss there was in living
When the Lady o' the May
Held her court of Perfect Weather
Open for us night and day !

Down our green rows she came tripping,
Laughing low in silvery peals,
With a troop of blue-eyed daisies
And corn-flowers at her heels.

“Corn, oh, corn,” she called, “good-morrow,
Lift your heads and drink your fill
Of my rich old wine of sunshine,
Sweeter than the grapes distill.”

“Corn, oh, corn, good-night,” she whispered,
“When the moon and stars arise,
Drink my health in beaded dew-drops
Brighter than my sparkling eyes.”

Then we swore upon our corn-cobs
We would row our grain some day,
Small and white, and smooth and even,
Like the pearly teeth of May.

We are old stalks in our dotage,
Prone to rambling talk forsooth;
But old men will sometimes babble
Of the sweethearts of their youth.

“Dry as corn-stalks,” is a by-word
Of the fool who does not know
How our sap with warm emotions
Can quicken, throb, and glow.

Go and question May about it ;
She will blush and tell you, sir,
How our kisses thrilled her pulses,
And what jolly blades we were.

When a bird flew by us singing
We could scarcely keep our root—
Every leaf a sheet of music,
Every hollow joint a flute.

From our leaves we shed the rain-drops,
Like a glad heart sheddeth tears,
And sometimes they shone like jewels
Hanging from our tender ears.

Our joints were light and supple,
And we bent our heads and knees
Like gay and graceful courtiers,
And did homage to the breeze.

“Tassel corn ! oh, tassel, tassel !”
Called and whistled old Bob-White ;
“Tassel corn ! oh, tassel, tassel !
Wave your long plumes like a knight.”

And when May, the bud, burst open
Into June, the blossom, lo !
Our slender stalks grew stouter,
And our beard began to grow.

It grew longer than the barley's,
Than the beard of rye or wheat,
Till it flowed like good old Aaron's,
Rippling almost to our feet.

And the farmer's white-haired youngsters
Pulled it hard and laughed with glee—
“Long and thick, and soft and yellow,
So our own some day will be.”

Came a happy Singer, singing
Round the farm one dewy morn—
“In the field there is no glory
Like the glory of the corn.”

Came a Painter forth to paint us,
And he caught us, beard and all,
In a sunny, summer picture,
For his lady's chamber wall.

But the Painter had no color,
And the Poet had no rhyme,
That could match our grace and glory
When we were in our prime.

“Ripen corn ! oh, ripen, ripen !”
Whistled old Bob-White again ;
And our tender cobs grew harder,
Yellow, yellow grew our grain—

Till, against the inner lining
Of our shucks, as soft as lace,
It shone like beads of amber
In a velvet jewel-case.

And the woodpecker came rapping,
Tapping, tapping on the lids
Of our jewel-boxes, rapping,
“Open, open, who forbids?”

And the crow, the sly pickpocket,
Robbed us too, with flattering tongue,
As within the breezy hammocks
Of our broad green leaves he swung.

* * * * *

Harvest-men have stripped us naked,
And have pulled us by the ears ;
And the breezes that we worshiped
Mock us now with gibes and jeers.

Hard and stiff, with pains rheumatic
In our sapless joints, we stand
Tottering in broken furrows—
Good for nothing in the land.

On our bodies once so comely
Leprous spots of mould appear ;
And into our roots the snake-grass
Strikes its fangs without a fear.

Down our rows the gourds are running
With a pack of hairy vines,
Like the foxes through the corn-fields
Of the ancient Philistines.

Up our knees ill-mannered field-peas
Climb and scramble out of breath ;
And the beans, like boa-constrictors,
Are squeezing us to death.

On the hills and in the lowlands
There is nothing we can see
Half so gaunt, or half so graceless,
Or so desolate, as we.

But the big barn-house is brimful
Of our golden ears to-day,
As the big heart of the Poet
Is full of song in May.

At the mill the weary oxen
With the loaded wagons stop,
While the farmer to his neighbor
Boasts about his gathered crop.

From each heavy sack the miller
Takes his toll outside the door,
Where the big, soft-bellied meal-bags
Loll and wallow on the floor.

Now a peck and then a bushel,
Till the measures overflow
With our golden summer glory ;
Little does the miller know

That each pretty, yellow kernel,
Built as if by magic art,
Is a small, enchanted castle
That holds a Prince's heart.

Through the walls he sees no motion,
Feels no throb, and hears no sound ;
And between the heavy mill-stones
The enchanted hearts are ground.

But the spirits of the Princes
Float above the splashing wheel,
And the air is warm and fragrant
With the breath of Indian-meal.

Ah ! like Bards who live forever
In their songs of bliss or pain,
So the glory of the corn-stalk
Lives forever in its grain.

And the hearts of many people
Bless the day when we were born,
Little Princes of the Royal,
Good old line of Indian-Corn.

THE FLIGHT OF A PROPHET.

How silently they take their flight,
The old, decrepit Years,
Who steal away at dead of night,
Bent double with our cares !

They leave no beacon in the sky,
No footprints on the snow ;
Only the Poet's charmed eye
Can track them as they go.

Some say they die ; it is not so ;
But, when their days are spent,
In fiery chariots they go
As old Elijah went.

For they are prophéts from their birth,
Sons of the Prophet Time,
Whose voices rolling with the earth
Are heard in every clime.

The chariot will soon be here,
And it will bear away
Another old, prophetic Year
Before the dawn of day.

My feet will run to meet the bold
Young prophet of to-morrow ;
But with the failing and the old
To-night I part in sorrow.

For he has never lied to me ;
The horoscope he drew,
All that he prophesied would be,
Thus far has proven true.

The friends who loved me well last year
Have loved me better this ;
If foe I had, God shut my ear
Against the adder's hiss ;

My heart has known as little grief
As Poet's heart can know,
That quivers like an aspen-leaf
At every breath of woe.

Of so much good, so little ill,
Few other tongues can tell ;
And, though with tears my eyes o'erfill,
Old prophet, all is well !

The chariot is drawing nigh,
The ambient clouds are fair ;
I hear the starry wheels on high
Revolving in the air.

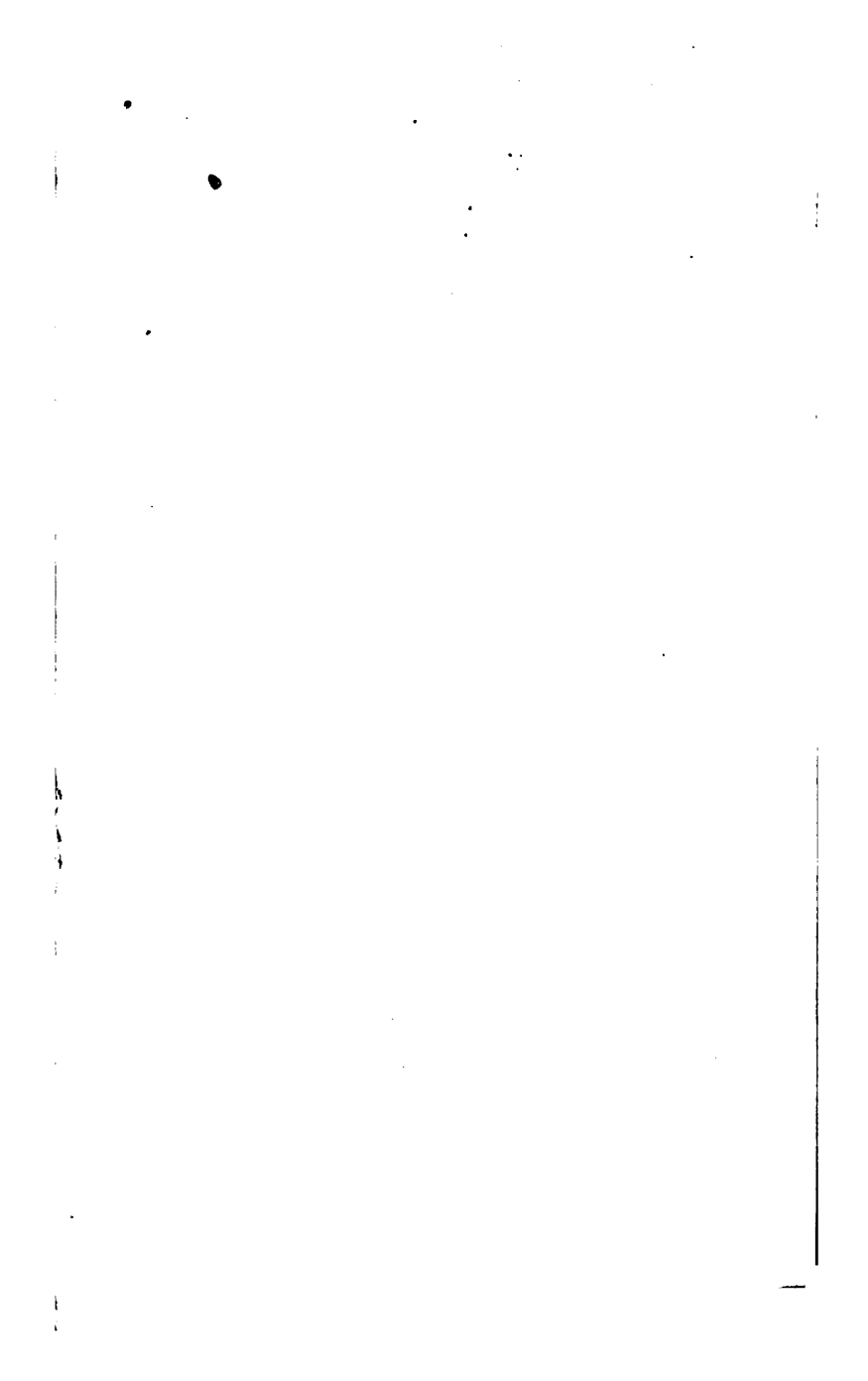


In silent awe I look above,
And see with tearful eyes
The good old prophet whom I love
Translated to the skies.

He blesses with a shadowy hand,
His voice is faintly heard,
By signs he makes me understand
His last prophetic word.

Alas! the chariot is gone,
The Old Year lost to view;
Softly his mantle falls upon
The shoulders of the New.

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